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ABSTRACT

The ecclesiastical history of Central Europe is characterized, in the period between the 1848 revolution and World War I, by a number of significant developments, taking place most of the times at the meeting point with the political factor. Thus, the period we have settled upon, the years 1900-1918, constitutes in the plan of ecclesiastical structures the result of the changes implemented in the previous half century. Novel facts occurring now, such as the establishment of the Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric of Hajdúdorogh, represent the finality of the projects conceived and initiated in the second half of the 19th century. Also, the Greek-Catholic confessional identities of the area: Romanian, Ruthenian, Hungarian, as they appear in the time range between 1900 and 1918, are the result of the church reforms, of the developments on national and political levels and of those within the Church-State relations in Hungary during the second half of the 19th century. After mid-nineteenth century, the identity physiognomy of the Greek Catholic Churches in Transleithania will be finalized in terms of constitutional organization, religious institutions and legislation, remaining as such for then on. The Greek Catholicism in this region will be marked during the next period only by the redrawing of the political state boundaries at the end of World War I, a process that entailed a reorganization of the dioceses, and later by "history's roller", that acted with

annihilating effects after World War II, leading to the abolition of several Greek Catholic churches in this area (Ukraine – 1946, Romania - 1948).

Initial steps for establishing a Hungarian Greek Catholic bishopric date back at the beginning of the 6th decade of the 19th century. To the desire of the bishopric founding was also added the one of the recognition of Hungarian as liturgical language. In order to justify the request, the Holy See's position was invoked, which allowed the use of vernacular languages, spoken by the people, for the Eastern-rite communities that embraced union with the Roman Church. It seems that at that time, in some parishes in this part of Hungary, the Hungarian was already used in religious service. A very important role in this matter was played by the translations of some religious books in Hungarian. The first such translation dates from the early 19th century, when various priests manifested such concerns. It began with short prayer books and it continued until the basic religious cult ceremony books were translated. If at the beginning of the 19th century Hungarian was used only in extra-liturgical services, at the funerals, or just for reading the prayers, after 1867, with the large aid of some benevolent bishops - more or less Magyarised – this language began to be used in official liturgical services.

In 1868, after the signing of the *Ausgleich*, the movement born in Hajdúdorogh by its leaders and through submissions written by them gets a national echo. Hungarian governments, various politicians in the Diet of Budapest, transform the request for a Hungarian bishopric and for the use of Hungarian as liturgical language, from a local into a national issue. Committees have been established, one in Hajdúdorogh, the other centrally, in the capital of the kingdom. The role of the Ruthenian Magyarised elite, both secular and ecclesiastical, should be also added. Their combined actions, the good moment and the Holy See's benevolence resulted in the establishment of the new bishopric.

Ten years after the beginning of the movement a first glimpse of the committees' initiative was to be seen. In 1873 the vicarage of Hajdúdorogh was established, but the movement's leaders were not satisfied with just that, persevering towards obtaining the bishopric. Now was the moment when more and more liturgical books began to be translated, and the liturgy was officiated in Hungarian on the territory of the vicarage.

The development of this movement knows periods of activity and maximum pressure on the Apostolic Nunciature and the Holy See, such as the whole second half of the 19th century, more precisely the years 1863-1900, but also periods of relative calm, until 1911, when negotiations for the bishopric have begun. Between 1911-1912 the Budapest authorities are pressing hard on the nuncio Bavona, and after its passage into eternity (January 1912), on the diplomat of the Holy See in Vienna, Francesco Rossi-Stockalper, to finalize as soon as possible the project of the bishopric's establishment. Throughout this period, the Romanian Church United with Rome becomes aware only occasionally of the Hungarian governments' projects and the development of the negotiations. This happens mainly by press, which captures moments and sequences of these steps. The Macău parish incident is added to all this - the parish asked to be part of the planned diocese, directly involving by this the diocese of Oradea. Disinformation through omission was used in the relationship with the Romanians: the parties directly concerned with the realization of the new ecclesiastical project often spoke in general terms about the creation of a new Greek Catholic bishopric in Hungary, or about a Ruthenian united diocese establishment, which made the Romanian reactions occur tardy, too late for anything to be done. In fact, the representatives of the Romanian Church began to really take attitude only after the Hungarian project was already on the track to accomplishment. Only starting with 1912 the Romanian written protests began taking the route to Vienna or Rome.

What can also be determined about the establishment of this bishopric is that the usual procedure in the case of any new diocese founding was avoided. From the available sources used to research this moment in the history of the Greek Catholic Church in Hungary, the institutions involved in this process seem to be the Hungarian government, the Nunciature in Vienna and Pope Pius' Secretariat of State, represented by Merry del Val, secretary of state at the time. The Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" was not involved. The correspondence between Budapest, Vienna and Rome mentioned only once the name Gotti, the prefect of "Propaganda", but his opinion was not asked on the subject of the diocese in Hungary, but in the context of some disagreements emerged between the Ruthenians in North America, who called for their own diocese. This hypothesis is also supported by the notes of the Latin Archbishop of Bucharest, Raymund Netzhammer,

who wrote in his diary that prefect Gotti said to him during a hearing in April 1912, that “Propaganda” was not consulted, and that all arrangements which completed the establishment of the new diocese, had as actors the Nunciature, the Hungarian governments and the Pope, represented by the Secretary of State Merry del Val.

The newspaper "Românul", in its edition of July the 28th 1918, published under the title *The Hungarian Greek Catholic Bishopric* an interview taken by one of its correspondents in Rome, with a representative of the “Propaganda Fide”. After the interview mentioned in its preamble the difficulty of boarding someone in that court, a dialog is narrated with a priest who is kept anonymous. He confirmed that the establishment of a new bishopric had to be done with the help of the Congregation “de Propaganda Fide”: "Yes it is our attribute, but this time we didn't know anything about it. We were aware of this fact only after the publication of the Papal bull". The Romanian journalist asked then who was involved in this process, obtaining the following reply: "The Pope did everything, the Pope together with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador; we haven't been asked, we did not know anything".

It should therefore be asked why “de Propaganda” wasn't involved in the founding of a new bishopric. Together with the Vienna Nunciature they ought to know best the situation in this area and decide whether or not a new Eastern-rite bishopric in Hungary was appropriate and needed. This is how things came to a distorted presentation of the facts, a situation that determined the reaction of Pope Pius X: when specifically addressed on this issue by the Romanian bishops Radu and Hossu, he's said to have exclaimed: „Mi hanno ingagnato!” (They've tricked me!).

Regarding the Hungarian liturgical language desired by the applicants, that issue had experienced a flat denial from the Holy See. Approval would have meant too many complications that could arise from such a concession. The riskiest could come from the Roman Catholic Hungarians, who at that time used Latin as the language of worship. Finally, a quip was found: Greek was proclaimed the official liturgical language in the new diocese. Only then could the establishment of the new bishopric be approved, with the Hungarian hopes about a future language change hiding in the background. Priests across the newly created diocese were granted a period of three years to learn this language to the level it could be used in liturgical services. This time,

however, was insufficient and despite the opposition of the Holy See, the use of Hungarian as liturgical language continued on the new bishopric's territory.

The lifetime of the Hajdúdorogh bishopric, as settled in 1912, was ephemeral. In 1918, when World War I came to an end and the dualistic state was divided, major changes took place in the territorial and legal form of the diocese. The numerous Romanian pleadings finally reached their goal. The Romanian bishoprics took back stolen parishes from 1912 and the bishopric of Hajdúdorogh was reduced to the boundaries of the old vicarage from 1873.

Scholars sought explanations for the reasoning of Pope Pius X when he agreed to the establishment of the new bishopric. A possible explanation is given by the historian Ioan Georgescu, according to whom the papacy made such a concession to the Hungarians as a reward for the Emperor and Apostolic King of Hungary, Francisc Iosif, who helped organize the International Eucharistic Congress in Vienna in September 1912. The fact is that with the establishment of the new bishopric, the image of the Holy See and the Pope among the Transylvanian Romanians had much to lose. From the mythical perception formed during the time of Pius IX, and perpetuated during the pontificate of Leo XIII, the image of Pius X reached a considerably lower level, as obviously shown in the Romanian press of the time, more than in other sources.

Before and after the promulgation by Pius X of the bull *Christifideles Graeci Ritus*, on 8th of June 1912, the protests of the Romanian bishops represented the first and most visible action of the Transylvanian Church United with Rome against the establishment of the Hajdúdorogh Greek Catholic bishopric. Metropolitan Victor Mihalyi and his suffragan bishops Demetriu Radu and Vasile Hossu opposed the establishment of the new dioceses, primarily because they saw in it a violation of the autonomy of the Romanian Greek Catholic diocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș, guaranteed by the Holy See *Ecclesia Christi* bull from November the 26th 1853, subsequently confirmed by other papal documents. The inclusion of some parishes from the bishoprics of Gherla and Oradea in the recently established Hungarian diocese meant for the Romanian bishops a brutal violation of their ecclesiastical autonomy.

Romanian hierarchs have stated their views mainly through direct personal interventions at political and church officials of the time: the minister of cults and other

government members in Budapest, Primate Archbishop Vaszary Kolozs followed by Csernoch Janos, other Roman Catholic bishops in Hungary, then the nuncios Bavona and Scapinelli and the diplomat Rossi-Stockalper, the one who provided the interim between the two nuncios in the late 1911 and early next year. The Romanian bishops also protested in Rome, at various personalities of the Roman Curia and at Pope Pius X himself, from who's mouth the bishop Hossu heard, it seems, the famous phrase: *Mi hanno inganato!* (They've tricked me!). In addition to their personal protests, the Romanian bishops sent to all these destinations individual and collective petitions, asking for the Romanian point of view to be respected or for the revising of the bull, after its promulgation.

The bishops also attempted to involve the communities (faithful people, clergy or members of the intelligentsia) in order to create a general protest movement of the Romanian Greek Catholics against the newly created diocese. They have combined diplomacy and tact with firmness and a loud tone, assuming their place as defenders of the Romanian Church, even though some voices in the Romanian press had sometimes criticized them.

Secondly, we should underline the existence of an attitude expressed by the masses: the local priests and the people. Their reaction to the new Hungarian diocese generally starts later than that of the bishops, after the diocese of Hajdúdorogh was brought to life. The initiators of the protests at this level were especially priests, but also members of the rural intelligentsia. The Romanian parishes were first in the line of protesters, followed by many of the bilingual ones taken from the bishops of Gherla and Oradea. They express themselves mainly through memoranda and petitions sent to their bishops, but also to the Nunciature in Vienna or to the Holy See. Numerous copies of this written protests sent by the Romanian villages are still kept in the pontifical archives, as we personally had the opportunity to convince ourselves. Along with the directly involved parishes, petitions and solidarity memoranda were also sent by other Romanian villages. Between other forms of community protests, one includes the opposing attitude towards the envoys sent by the bishops of Muncaci to temporarily look after the taken parishes and towards those sent by the bishop of Hajdúdorogh after their final incorporation.

The Greek Catholic lay intellectuals (but not only them) represent, inside the Romanian Church, a third level of attitude towards the bishopric of Hajdúdorogh. Their protests had materialized in a sustained campaign, waged by the Transylvanian Romanian press, on the topic of the consequences of the new diocese establishment. The most important protest of the Romanian secular elite was represented by the National Assembly in Alba Iulia, on May the 29th 1912. It should be noted that among the organizers of this action there were well known personalities and young Romanian politicians recently involved in the political life of Austro-Hungary. The Hajdúdorogh moment represents for the Romanians in the dual monarchy the last major crisis before World War I, after the failure of the Memorandum Movement (1892-1894). The intellectuals' protest didn't lack radical accents, such as the threatening of "breaking the seals", as Iuliu Maniu said in Alba Iulia, meaning by this the passage to Orthodoxy as an alternative to the incorporation of the 83 Romanian parishes in the Hajdúdorogh diocese.

It should also be remember that the Romanians' position in the context of the new bishopric establishment found followers and supporters outside the Romanian circles, such as the most resounding name of Archduke and Imperial heir Francis Ferdinand. The Romanian protest movement in Austria and Hungary also found favorable echoes and supporters in Romania. The best known voice from the Old Kingdom, who participated in the discussion on the "Hajdúdorogh-affair" was that of the historian Nicolae Iorga.

The establishment of the Hungarian Greek Catholic diocese of Hajdúdorogh was therefore an act of ecclesiastic politics, imposed at the crossroads of ideology, politics and church life, through the convergent action of several factors: the Hungarian governments, the Holy See (the State Secretariate), the Nunciature of Vienna. The confessional map of Central Europe was enriched with another Eastern-rite Catholic bishopric, whose establishment divided the implied parts, as history always dose, in winners and losers.